

797 by Fa. Antonino and Fa. Pelino de Castrovalva. This mission holds some five hundred Indians of the Mundurucu tribe.

[124] The missionary Fa. Pelino who was alone there, his companion having already left Bacabal, lent me as an interpreter a Mundurucu Indian who understands and speaks the Portuguese and Tupi languages in addition to his own dialect.

114 I continued my journey up the Tapajoz and reached the mouth of the Cadereri River, an eastern tributary of the Tapajoz, five days after leaving the Mission of Bacabal.

There, according to what I had been told, I was supposed to meet a bold frontiersman who knew the way to the central villages. Unhappily, however, I did not find him, and the members of my crew knew nothing about the course of the Cadereri River.

Here I was, perplexed for lack of guides and information, when two Mundurucu savages appeared upon the beach.

We asked them, through the interpreter, how long it would take us to reach the source of the Cadereri.

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805] The older of the two savages responded with the following sign: with his index finger he pointed due east, and then he traced a semicircle following the apparent course of the sun to the west, accompanying this gesture with expressive looks, motions and sounds; and he repeated this slowly and distinctly six times in such a way that before the interpreter could explain his message I had already understood that the savage meant it would take us six days.

He also told us that we would meet other Indians at the headwaters of the Cadereri, who could guide us to the village of Necodemos whence he and his companion came. [75]

[103] I was impressed by this name of Necodemos which the Mundurucu gave one of their main villages, for it is the name of the generous and compassionate Jew who bestowed simple funeral dignities upon Christ -- a shroud to enclose his body and a sepulcher to protect it.

I do not know why the Mundurucu gave this name to their village, but I imagine that the coincidence of names is no more than a mere accident.

In any case, I decided to seek the village of Necodemos in preference to any other.

161 Furthermore, during the summer months, large numbers of
 [321] families leave the malocas and build flimsy huts in the heart of the
 342] woods, where in their isolation they encounter more abundant
 game.

161 It is certain, however, that this tribe is one of the largest and
 181 most powerful in the valley of the Amazon. Alcide d'Orbigny
 hesitated whether to consider it a mere tribe or a nation. It has
 long been a strongly organized republic. The central malocas,
 located beyond the active reach of our authorities, enjoy the same
 boundless freedom as if they formed an independent State.

115 In face of the impossibility to carry out by myself a strict
 census, I must rely on the opinion of a citizen who resides in the
 town of Itaituba and whom I judge to be very competent in this
 matter. I refer to Lieutenant Joaquim Caetano Corrêa, a wealthy
 tradesman who was nominated to the post of superintendent of the
 Tapajoz River Indians by Councillor Sebastião do Rego Barros,
 President of Pará, in September 1853, and who has exercised this
 function ever since.

Although this respected citizen has never been to the cen-
 tral villages, he nevertheless entertains close relations with the
 Mundurucu who live along the banks of the Tapajoz. [101]

Here is the population table furnished by Lt. Joaquim
 Caetano Corrêa.

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NAME OF THE MALOCAS

POPULATION

Dauapone	1,500
Carucupi	2,300
Dairi	2,600
Capipique	2,000
Necodemos	2,100
Aiká (Samuuma)	1,500
Acupari	800
Areucré	700
Arebaduri	400
Teiu Curupi	500
Ipsananti	600

621	Cererepça	500
161	Cabroá	500
103	Imburariri	350
	Macapá	360
	Ucuberi	250
	Cabetutum	350
	Chacorão	700
	Airi	300
	Bacabal (Mission)	500
	Boburé	100
	Total	18,910

These figures may be somewhat exaggerated, or at least the population of these malocas may have undergone considerable changes. The village of Chacorão, for example, is now abandoned; that of Boburé is nearly extinct. Though it is certain that nowadays the numbers of strictly savage Mundurucu do not reach [102] 18,000 souls, I am convinced that the old population centers of the tribe, formerly established on the banks of the Upper and [197] Lower Tapajoz, in themselves exceeded this figure by far. These last-mentioned groups settled in the old missions, or incorporated themselves little by little into the Christian population in such a way that their descendants today do not even understand the dialect of the tribe.

XIII

Maloca of Necodemos -- Plan of Mundurucu malocas

361 Necodemos is located on a hill, in the center of a vast plain, not far from the woods.

342 In the center of the maloca stands the ekça or warriors' quarters.

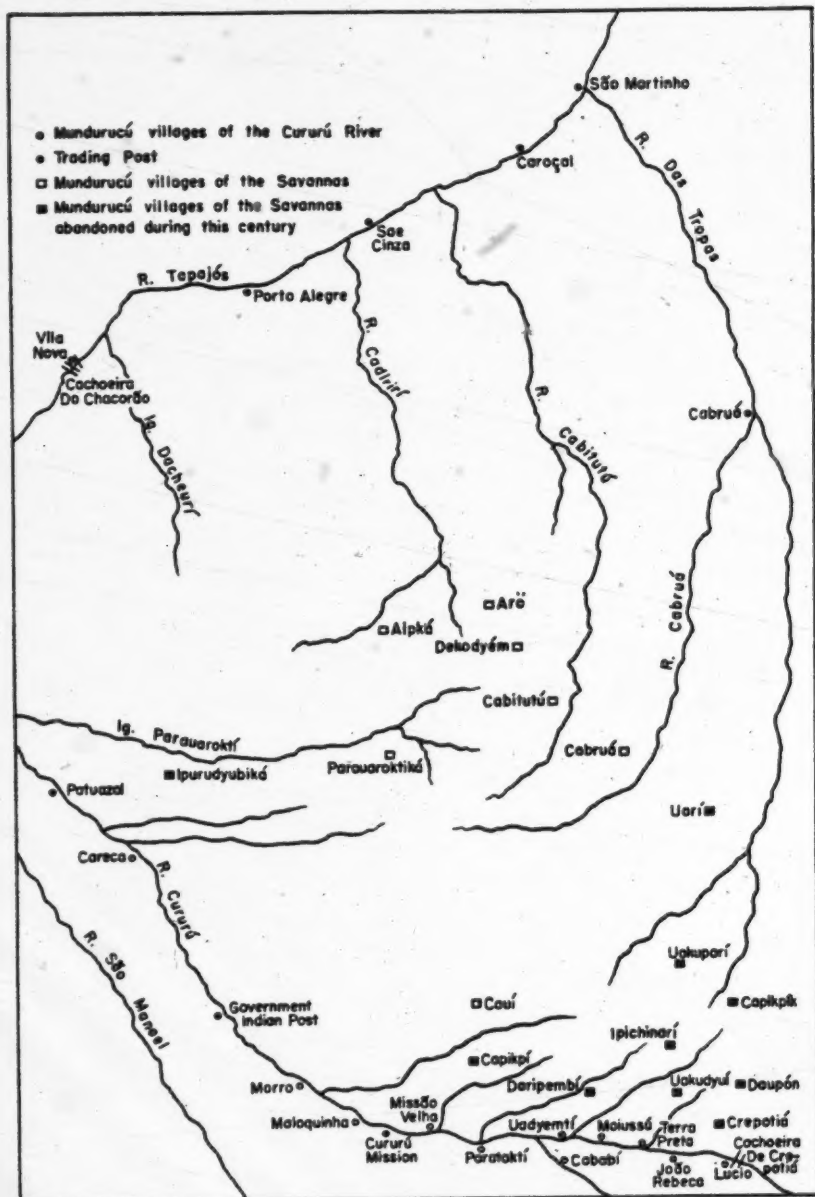
361 The ekça consists of an elongated house, about one hundred meters long, roofed with thatch, its whole length open towards the

11: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1958

SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

Murphy: Mundurucú Religion

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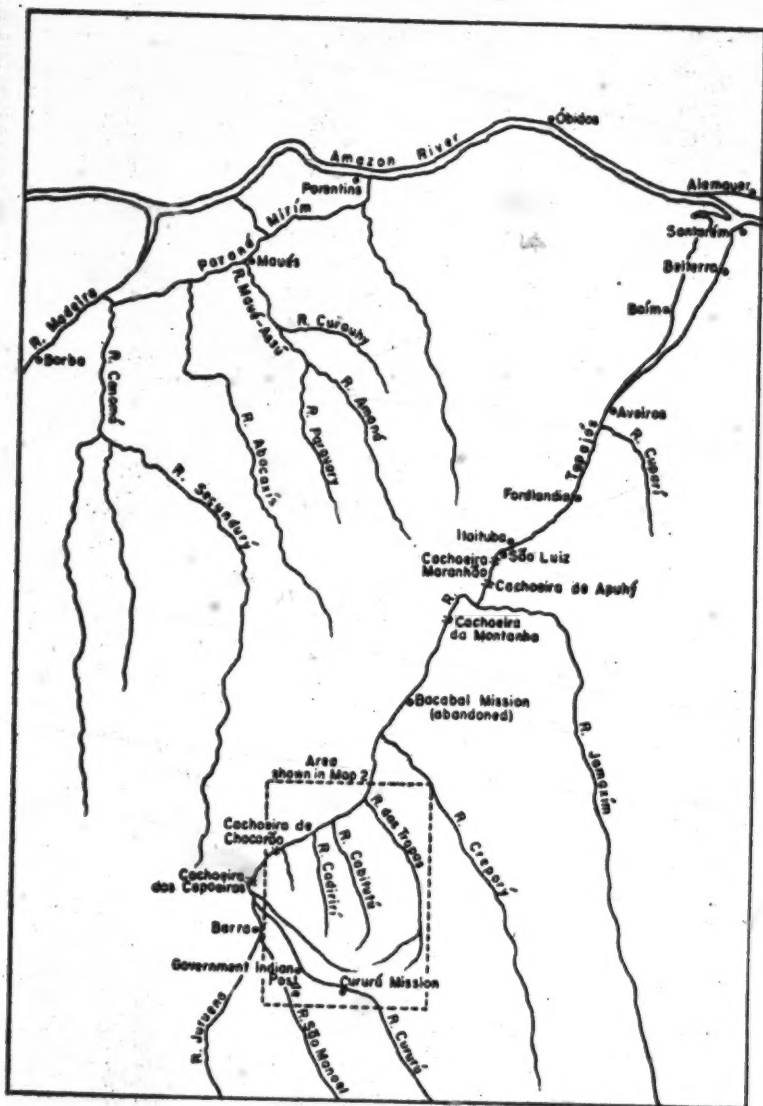
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Map 2. Mundurucú territory and villages.

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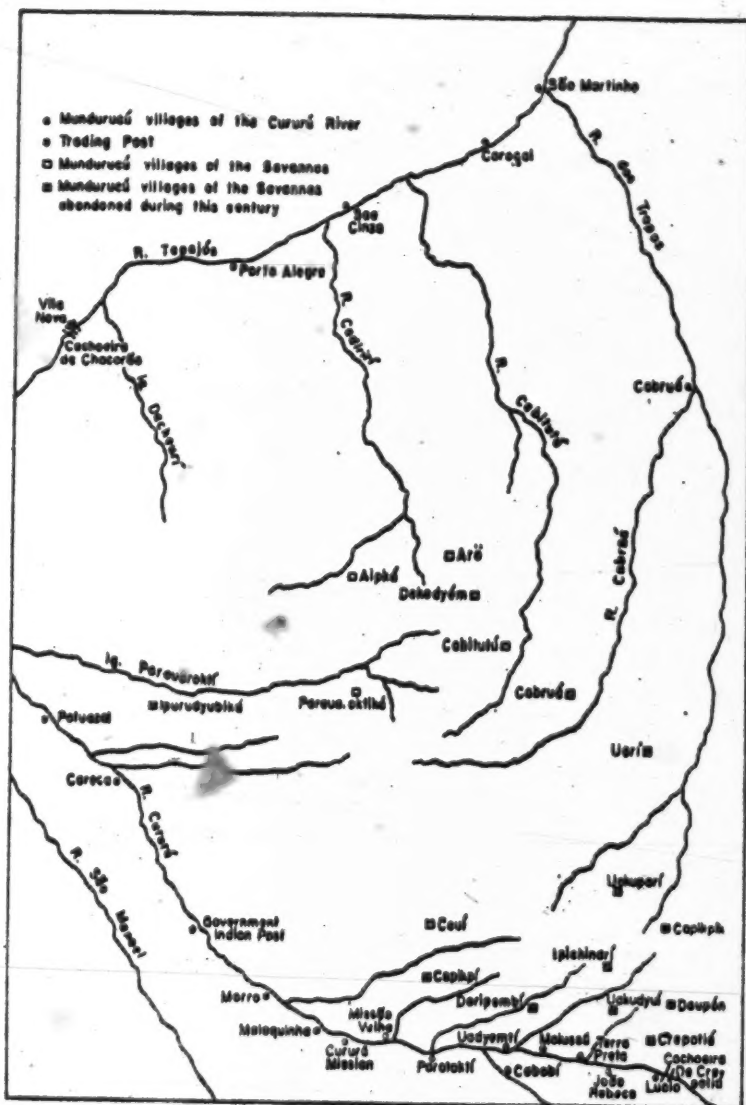
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Map 1. Region of the Tapajós and lower Madeira rivers

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Map 2. Present territory of the Mundurucú Indians

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